

§ 115C-562.2. Scholarship grants.

(a) The Authority shall make available no later than February 1 annually applications to eligible students for the award of scholarship grants to attend any nonpublic school. Information about scholarship grants and the application process shall be made available on the Authority's Web site. Beginning March 15, the Authority shall begin awarding scholarship grants according to the following criteria:

- (1) First priority shall be given to eligible students who received a scholarship grant during the previous school year if those students have applied by March 1.
- (2) After scholarship grants have been awarded to prior recipients as provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection, scholarships shall be awarded with remaining funds as follows:
 - a. At least fifty percent (50%) of the remaining funds shall be used to award scholarship grants to eligible students residing in households with an income level not in excess of the amount required for the student to qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program.
 - b. No more than forty percent (40%) of the remaining funds shall be used to award scholarship grants to eligible students entering either kindergarten or first grade.
 - c. Any remaining funds shall be used to award scholarship grants to all other eligible students.

(b) Scholarship grants awarded to eligible students residing in households with an income level not in excess of the amount required for the student to qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program shall be for amounts of up to four thousand two hundred dollars (\$4,200) per year. Scholarship grants awarded to eligible students residing in households with an income level in excess of the amount required for the student to qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program shall be for amounts of not more than ninety percent (90%) of the required tuition and fees for the nonpublic school the eligible child will attend. Tuition and fees for a nonpublic school may include tuition and fees for books, transportation, equipment, or other items required by the nonpublic school. No scholarship grant shall exceed four thousand two hundred dollars (\$4,200) per year per eligible student, and no scholarship grant shall exceed the required tuition and fees for the nonpublic school the eligible student will attend.

(b1) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, within the funds appropriated by the General Assembly to award scholarship grants to eligible students under this Part, the Authority may award scholarship grants to at least 2,000 more eligible students each school year than were served in the prior school year.

(c) The Authority shall permit an eligible student receiving a scholarship grant to enroll in a different nonpublic school and remain eligible. An eligible student receiving a scholarship grant who transfers to another nonpublic school during the year may be eligible to receive a pro rata share of any unexpended portion of the scholarship grant for tuition and fees at the nonpublic school to which the student transfers.

(d) The Authority shall establish rules and regulations for the administration and awarding of scholarship grants and may include in those rules a lottery process for selection of scholarship grant recipients within the criteria established by this section.

(e) Scholarship applications and personally identifiable information related to eligible students receiving scholarship grants shall not be a public record under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. For the purposes of this section, personally identifiable information means any information directly related to a student or members of a student's household, including the

name, birthdate, address, Social Security number, telephone number, e-mail address, financial information, or any other information or identification number that would provide information about a specific student or members of a specific student's household. (2013-360, s. 8.29(a); 2014-100, ss. 8.25(a), (b); 2016-94, ss. 11A.3(b), (e).)